

Update about Counterfeit Drugs

Intro/Background

We are speaking with all secondary school students in KFL&A to raise awareness about recent events that have occurred locally and across the country regarding concerns about counterfeit drugs. For example, some students have purchased pills being passed off as Xanax that were in fact fake, and it could contain other harmful substances or other drugs. Xanax, a type of Benzodiazepine, is commonly used to treat various forms of anxiety and panic disorders.

It has never been a riskier time for anyone to experiment with drugs. Risk of overdose is high right now. Kingston has higher rates of Emergency Department visits and deaths related to opioids compared to the provincial average. You may have heard of Fentanyl which is a strong opioid that can cause dangerously slow breathing and has been involved in many overdoses. You can't smell, taste or see it. Even a small amount can be dangerous.

Counterfeit drugs are drugs that are made to look like real prescription medication, making it nearly impossible to distinguish between what is a legal prescription and what has been made to look like a prescription medication but is in fact an illegal product. With counterfeit drugs, you never know where it is coming from or what is in it. Some counterfeit drugs may be laced with other more potent drugs such as Fentanyl.

Chocolate Chip Cookie Analogy

We know that fentanyl can't be evenly distributed across a batch of pills, or perfectly mixed into other types of drugs. If you baked a batch of chocolate chip cookies, no matter how well you mixed the batter it would be unlikely that each cookie would have the exact same number of chocolate chips, right? So, for example, one pill in the batch may contain no fentanyl, whereas another pill could contain a lethal amount. Because you can't see the fentanyl in the drug, there is no way of knowing which pill will be deadly.

Medication should only be taken if it is prescribed by a doctor. Taking someone else's prescription drugs is against the law and is very dangerous. The use of any illegal drug poses risks and can be dangerous. Signs of an overdose include slow or no breathing, limp body, pinpoint pupils, loss of consciousness, unresponsive, deep snoring or gurgling sounds, vomiting, cold clammy skin, fingernails and lips turning blue. If you think someone needs help please call 9-1-1

What can you do?

Look out for each other and make sure an adult in the building knows if you are worried a student may have taken drugs and is having an adverse reaction.

Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act – provides some legal protection for people who experience or witness an overdose and call 9-1-1 for help.

Where to go for more information or to talk:

- Student Services, teachers, Kairos and/or family

Naloxone: is a medication that can temporarily reverse an overdose caused by opioid drugs and other drugs contaminated with opioids.

- Naloxone is in each high school and in the City of Kingston a naloxone kit is available in 14 public building with the AEDs.
- Kits can be accessed free of charge. Members of the public can get FREE Naloxone (nasal spray) kits and training at KFL&A Public Health offices and some pharmacies.

Provide info relevant to your school:

- **Public Health** - Kits are available on a drop-in basis Monday to Friday between 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at our main office at 221 Portsmouth Ave in Kingston
 - call ahead to the Napanee, Cloyne, or Sharbot Lake offices to arrange a pick-up time at those locations. **NO OHIP CARD OR ID IS REQUIRED.** You will spend about 20-30 minutes with a nurse and leave with a kit.
- **Pharmacies** - Free Naloxone kits are also available through [community pharmacies](#) in the KFL&A area. Not all pharmacies carry it so it's a good idea to call ahead. Pharmacies may have nasal spray naloxone kits or an injectable form. An OHIP card may be requested but is not required.

Other Resources to Bring

- Training Naloxone Kit
- Opioid Pamphlet